DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 321 561 FL 018 681

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TITLE The Hawaiian Language Immersion Program: Classroom Discourse and Children's Development of Communicative Competence.
PUB DATE 18 Nov 89
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English (79th, Baltimore, MD, November 18, 1989).
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Classroom Communication; *Communicative Competence (Languages); Discourse Analysis; Ethnography; *Hawaiian; *Immersion Programs; *Language Acquisition; Language Teachers; Native Language Instruction; Primary Education; Second Language Instruction; Uncommonly Taught Languages

ABSTRACT

In its first year, the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program combined kindergarten and first-grade students in two classes. About half of the students had no speaking knowledge of Hawaiian; the remainder had attended Hawaiian-language preschools and/or spoke Hawaiian at home. Both teachers, fluent speakers of Hawaiian, were new to teaching. The teachers spoke only Hawaiian after the first 2 days of school, and students were reminded to speak in Hawaiian. By spring, lapses into English or pidgin became infrequent. Visiting parents were impressed with the warm relationships evident between children and teachers. Classroom organization combined adaptation to Hawaiian values and cultural practices with practices common to other elementary classrooms. While occasionally correcting students' Hawaiian, teachers more commonly modelled correct form or set up repeating routines to support student learning. Teachers treated students as true conversational partners, focusing primarily on content comprehension, with brief but significant instructional sequences inserted. Language learning in peer-peer interactions was encouraged. The students were found to take their work seriously, and were on task a high proportion of the time. (MSE)

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The Hawaiian Language Immersion Program: Classroom Discourse and Children's Development of Communicative Competence

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Presented at the 79th Annual Convention of the National Council of the Teachers of English, in the Symposium on Renaissance of Hawaiian Language and Culture Through Early Language Immersion, 18 November 1989, Baltimore

ED321561

This paper summarizes the results of the ethnographic study of classroom instruction and interaction conducted by the evaluation team in the first year of the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program. A question of great interest to the first year evaluation team was what kinds of interactional patterns would evolve in the two classrooms, and the impact these patterns might have on children's acquisition of communicative competence in Hawaiian.

Both of the HLIP classes (of approximately 15 students each) combined kindergarten and first grade children. About half of the children in each grade level had no speaking knowledge of Hawaiian language upon entering the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program. The other half of the children had attended Punana Leo (language nest) Hawaiian language preschools, and in a few cases, Hawaiian was frequently or predominantly spoken at home. The teachers therefore faced a mixture of grade levels and a mixture of speakers and non-speakers of Hawaiian at each grade level. We wondered, could total immersion in Hawaiian be maintained under these conditions? We also wanted to examine the

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potentially differential roles of teacher-student and peer-peer interactions in maintaining immersion and scaffolding the learning of both speakers and non-speakers of Hawaiian.

Although the teachers were fluent in oral and written Hawaiian, for both it was the first year of regular classroom teaching experience at the kindergarten and first grade level, and their first experience teaching in Hawaiian. One had an elementary teaching certificate, the other a secondary teaching certificate. Neither had been given training for immersion education. The teachers were hired at the last minute, and when school began, little in the way of teaching materials translated into Hawaiian were ready. These conditions simultaneously presented the teachers with formidable problems and creative possibilities. Would classroom organization or management reflect Hawaiian culture in significant ways? What discourse patterns would evolve when all classroom talk was conducted in Hawaiian?

Some Findings

First, with regard to language of instruction and interaction, the teachers maintained total immersion in Hawaiian after the first two days of school. Children who initially could not speak Hawaiian spoke to the teachers in English, with the teachers always replying in Hawaiian. During the fall semester, students were often heard speaking English or Hawai'i Creole English (HCE; locally called "Pidgin") to each other during non-instructional times. In such cases, a teacher might approach individual students and gently remind them to speak Hawaiian. By

late spring, lapses into English or HCE were infrequent, and all of the students had attained a functional to proficient degree of fluency in Hawaiian.

With regard to Hawaiian cultural values and practices, parents and others who visited the classrooms were struck by the warm relationships characteristic of interactions among the teachers and children. Hawaiian values were emphasized by the teachers, including showing aloha, sharing, and treating each other like family. These values were in part supported by uniquely Hawaiian classroom routines and activities, including traditional welcome chants used to greet visitors to the classrooms; poems expressing respect for parents and family recited before going to lunch and at the end of the school day; singing Hawaiian songs and performing hula; and the honoring of a "beloved child" each week, involving a chart on which were written statements of reminiscence and affection from each of the selected child's classmates. We observed that relationships among the children were strikingly nurturing, and a parent-child relationship was also visible between teachers and students.

Classroom organization and activities combined adaptations to Hawaiian values and cultural practices with practices found in many other elementary classrooms in Hawai'i. A typical day included whole-class activities concerned with the calendar, attendance, pledge of allegiance, storybook reading, and sharing time -- standard stuff in American classrooms.

Example 1 on the hand-out comes from sharing time in one classroom, here translated into English (date: 2/12/88). A first-grader Kamanu has brought her kama'a huila (roller skates)

to school.[1]

EXAMPLE 1: Kama'a Huila Sharing Time Segment -- Kamanu (first grader) and her roller skates (Kawai is a kindergarten boy) [original in Hawaiian, translated here into English]:

Several: It's beautiful, Kamanu.
Teacher: Kawai, what are these?
Kawai: Skates [in English].
Teacher: Roller skates [in Hawaiian].
Several: [exclaim with dawning realization re: word]
Teacher: Do you see wheels?
Several: Yes.
(Kamanu explains that she has a hula hoop but didn't want to bring it, so brought her skates instead)
Teacher: How about the first time that you did this activity, did you fall down a few times?
Kamanu: No.
Teacher: No? [disbelievingly]
Kamanu: No! [forcefully]
Teacher: You went straight?
Kamanu: No, whenever I fall, whenever I begin to fall, I put this thing down [indicating rubber brake on front of skate], and then I let it [the skate] down [demonstrating].
Teacher: Oh, fine fine. But isn't this activity somewhat difficult?
Kamanu: No, I can go on [straight].
Teacher: Now? [meaning, rather than when she first started]
Kamanu: Yes, on my mom's hill, I can go down, and, I have to bend a little.
Teacher: Yes, I think this is difficult.
(Several children deny this)
Kamanu: I'm going to the Ice Palace. I was good, my mom said.
Teacher: Oh, you can ice skate, too?
Kamanu: No. My dad is going to teach me, but, but he went when he was small, he went to the Ice Palace.
Teacher: Yes, that kind of activity is also rather difficult.

In her sharing turn, Kamanu demonstrates her communicative competence in Hawaiian through: 1) answering teacher questions; 2) maintaining her point when challenged; 3) explaining how she managed not to fall; and 3) reporting on events or activities at different times -- past, present, and future. In terms of teaching strategies, notice that the teacher does not correct

Kamanu's speech, nor does she ask for full sentences. Instead, she focuses on Kamanu's reasoning process and ability to respond appropriately at the level of discourse. The interaction therefore engages Kamanu in a high level of cognitive functioning, as well as scaffolding her learning of Hawaiian language and discourse patterns.

Language arts, math, and other content areas were organized by grade level, and followed district-established curriculum goals for kindergarten and first grade, respectively. Lesson structures typical in American classrooms were used. The basic lesson structure identified by Mehan (1979) of Initiation-Response-Evaluation was prominent, as well as other slot-filling routines, question-answer sequences, etc.

Of greatest interest to the first year evaluation team was patterns of teacher-student and student-student interaction, and how these scaffolded or supported the children's learning of Hawaiian. First, we found that although teachers sometimes corrected a child's Hawaiian errors, the teachers primarily used two strategies for scaffolding student learning: modelling the correct form for the children, and especially for non-speakers, setting up repeating routines.

Example 2 on the hand-out illustrates how repeating routines were used to assist a child's learning during a whole-class language game. In the game, the teacher has a card with the name of an object -- in this case, a seashell -- in a basket. The students are to ask the teacher questions about the object, until they guess what it is. Then the teacher shows them the card with

the Hawaiian word on it. In Example 2 (which took place about half way through the school year), the student Kainoa spoke no Hawaiian at the beginning of the year, and was the youngest child in the class.

EXAMPLE 2: Repeating Routine in a Language Game -- Kainoa (very young kindergartener, non-speaker of Hawaiian on entry into HLIP) is assisted in constructing a question which leads to guessing the correct object:

K:	**Hiki iā ʻoe i kēia ma kahakai?**	Can you it at the beach?
T:	**Hiki iā ʻoe-**	Can you-
K:	**Hiki iā ʻoe-**	
T:	**-ke ʻike-**	-see-
K:	**-ke ʻike-**	
T:	**-ʻi kēlā mea-**	-that thing-
K:	**-ʻi kēlā mea-**	
T:	**-ma kahakai?**	-at the beach?
K:	**-ma kahakai?**	
T:	**Maopopo ia ʻoe?**	Do you know it?
K:	**ʻAe.**	Yes.
T:	**He aha ia?**	What is it?
K:	**Pūpū.**	Shell.
T:	**ʻAe, he pūpū.**	Yes, it's a shell.

Here, we see how the teacher assists Kainoa in correctly constructing the question he wanted to ask.

Example 3 on the hand-out illustrates cueing and modelling (date: 2/12/88). In the course of a reading lesson, the teacher wants the students to predict story events from the pictures prior to reading the text.

EXAMPLE 3: Cueing and Modelling by the Teacher During a Reading Lesson -- Kainoa is assisted by the teacher in predicting story events from pictures prior to reading the text:

T:	**ʻAe e nānā kākou i ke ki'i. He aha kāna e hana nei?**	Yes, let's look at the picture. What is he [the boy in the picture] doing?
P:	**Ke hoʻokomo nei ʻo ia i kēlā mea ma ʻo.**	He is putting that thing over there [points at picture: boy is putting pillows around the torso of girl].

K:	**Ka** pillow.	The pillow.
T:	**Ke ho'okau nei 'o ia i ka uluna ma luna ona?**	He is putting pillows on her? [modelling sentence & providing Hawn. term)]
P:	**'Ae.**	Yes.
T:	**No ke aha, Kainoa? No ke aha ke kau nei 'o ia kēia ma luna ona?**	Why, Kainoa? Why is he he putting it on her?
K:	Because she going-	
T:	**No ka mea-**	Because- [cueing Hawn]
K:	**No ka mea** she going fall down.	Because she is going to fall down.
T:	**No ka mea [e hā'ule ana 'o ia.**	Because she is going to fall down. [modelling]
Ss:	**[e hā'ule ana 'o ia.**	[in unison, joining in]
T:	**Pehea inā hā'ule 'o ia i lalo, 'eha ana 'o ia?**	What if she falls, will she be hurt?
Ss:	**'Ae.**	Yes.
Ke:	**'A'ole.**	No.
T:	**'A'ole, 'a'ole, no ka mea loa'a ka uluna.**	No, no, because of the pillows.
K:	But she going **'eha** over here.	But she's going to be injured over here [pointing above the area protected by the pillows].
T:	**'Eha ana 'o ia ma luna?**	Is she going to be hurt up above?
Ka:	**'Ae.**	Yes.
T:	**'Ae paha.**	Maybe so.
Ke:	**'A'ole paha.**	Maybe not.
N:	**'Ae paha.**	Maybe so [=I think so].
T:	**'Ae paha, 'a'ole paha, e 'ike ana kākou i ka- i ka i ka mo'olelo. 'Ae, ho'omau kākou.**	Maybe so, maybe not, we are going to find out in the- in the story. Okay, let's continue [reading].

Kainoa can only formulate "ka pillow" in attempting to indicate that the boy in the picture is putting pillows around the girl. The teacher models the sentence in Hawaiian through a question, while also providing the Hawaiian word for "pillow." In doing so, she asks Kainoa the reason for the action in the picture. Kainoa starts to respond in Hawai'i Creole English, which leads the teacher to model another sentence for him, this time through a repeating routine. Kainoa repeats on cue, indicating he is familiar with the routine. The teacher's strategy seems

effective in that Kainoa continues to be actively engaged in the lesson, volunteering another answer a few turns later, even though his Hawaiian repertoire is quite limited. This example illustrates language teaching with a primary focus on content comprehension. The teacher treats children as true conversational partners, with her brief but significant instructional sequences inserted so as not to derail the students' interest in the discussion.

The level of children's understanding of their teacher's Hawaiian is partly indicated by the complexity that teachers were able to include in their explanations to the children. In Example 4 on the hand-out, recorded only half-way through the year (2/5/88), the teacher explains why the mother cat in the story they are reading wants to hide her kittens from their human owners.

EXAMPLE 4: Teacher Explaining Why the Mother Cat Hides Her Kittens -- The teacher first asks the children why the cat hides the kittens from her human owners, but as no one knows, she explains:

T:	**'A'ole makemae nā mākua-hine i ka po'e e ho'opā iā lākou, 'eā, no ka mea, li'ili'i loa nā pēpē, 'oiai lākou i ka manawa 'akahi no lākou a hānau 'ia. Li'ili'i loa lākou, 'a'ole i wehe 'ia ko lākou mau maka, 'a'ole hiki ke nānā, 'eā. No laila, 'a'ole makemake nā mākua-hine i nā po'e e ho'opā iā lākou, ma hope ma'i.**	The mothers don't like people to touch them, you see, because the babies are very small during the time that they have just been born. They are so small that their eyes haven't been opened and can't look about, you see. Consequently, the mothers don't like people to touch them lest they become ill.
S:	**'A'ole wau i ho'opā.**	I didn't touch them!

Grammatically, the teacher's explanatory passage contains a high level of language. Besides simple verb sentences, compound

sentences using causal (because) and consequence (no laila) conjunctions, verb negation, and possessive plurals, the passage contains advanced structures using 'oiai (while), and 'akahi (just recently). The latter two are combined in a relative clause (a construction difficult even for advanced second language learners to master in Hawaiian), two passives, and ma hope (lest). During the reading lesson, therefore, the teacher's linguistic input for the children included modelling several levels of complexity in Hawaiian, which was appropriate given the varying levels of Hawaiian language skills represented by the children.

Examples 5 and 6 illustrate the use of Hawaiian language in math activities. In Example 5, the teacher explains the rules of a complicated math game to her students:

EXAMPLE 5: Explaining a Math Game -- From the teacher's explanation of how to play a complicated math game (translated from Hawaiian):

> "So, at any one time you shouldn't have ten. If you have ten, put the small ones [worth one] in here [indicating a central pool of cubes] and get one of these [holding a 10-piece cube]. How many tens must you get to make a hundred?" (A child says 10). "Yes. If you have ten of these [10-piece cubes], you can get one of these [100-piece cube]. And then put those [10-piece cubes] there [back in the pool]. The person with the most is the one who will win."

In Example 6, the teacher constructs a word problem for the children in an oral math lesson:

EXAMPLE 6: Word Problem -- During the math lesson, the teacher gives a series of word problems. Here is one (translated from Hawaiian):

T: How about this? Here are some problem exercises, yes,

with a story. How about this? Nalei wants nine candies. She wants nine, but she has two candies now. How many more candies must she obtain?

S1: I don't like candy.

S2: Seven.

T: Good.

As indicated earlier, the teachers encouraged children's support of each other's language learning in peer-peer interactions. In particular, students who had attended Punana Leo Hawaiian language preschools, and so began the year with a high level of fluency, were encouraged to assist non-speakers. Example 7 on the hand-out (recorded 1/26/88) is one of many interactions we observed in which relatively fluent speakers served as experts for less-fluent novices.

EXAMPLE 7: Peer interaction and teaching Hawaiian -- An abbreviated version. Two first-graders Kealoha (a girl who spoke Hawaiian at the beginning of the year) and Keanu (a boy who began as a non-speaker of Hawaiian) work side by side on same notebook, drawing pictures. Ka = Kealoha; Ku = Keanu.

Ku:	**Nānā.**	Look [at what I did].
Ka:	**Nānā i kāna hana.**	Look at his work [to observer; modelling]
	Hana ʻoe i ka niu.	Make a coconut [to Ku].
	Hana au i ka lau.	I'll make leaves. You make
	Hana ʻoe i ka mauʻu.	grass.

Ku: I go make grass.

(Teacher walks past, and hearing HCE, says to Ku:)

T:	**ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi, Keanu.**	Speak Hawaiian, Keanu.
	Ke kōkua nei ʻoe iā ia i ka ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi?	[to Ka:] Are you helping him to speak Hawaiian?

(Ka then speaks to Ku in Hawaiian, inviting him to repeat after her, and he does so exactly. She asks him a question about the drawing in Hawaiian, which he answers correctly. Then following the model set up earlier by her, he tells her:)

Ku:	**Hana ʻoe i ka pūpū.**	Make a shell.

(They both draw pictures of shells with spots on them.)

Ka:	**Hana i ka huahakalama "pu".**	Make the syllabic unit "pu" [focused on in class that day].

(She writes **"puʻu"** on the drawing; Ku reads it aloud.

In summary, a strong academic program was emphasized in both classrooms at the same time that the children were learning Hawaiian language. Children learned such functional uses of language as reporting events and experiences, discussing pictures and stories, reading, composing and writing multiple sentences on given topics, and translating from Hawaiian to English and from English to Hawaiian for their less-fluent peers -- all in Hawaiian. Teachers took advantage of lessons and activities to scaffold or support children's learning of new linguistic forms and appropriate uses of Hawaiian to express ideas and to interact socially.

The teachers' emotional closeness to the children, and the confidence in the children that they projected, was undoubtedly an important factor in the HLIP children's academic engagement. Children took their school work seriously, and were on task a high proportion of the time. Parents frequently commented that their HLIP child liked school and "found excuses" to attend school even when ill. Moreover, because they were learning Hawaiian, HLIP children were regarded as special. Positive feedback from the teachers, other adults, older peers and siblings, and the public attention given to the experimental program, undoubtedly increased the HLIP children's motivation for doing well in school and improving their Hawaiian language fluency. It seems clear that one importance of the program has been to increase native Hawaiian children's self-esteem and sense of pride in their own heritage.

NOTES

[1]All the examples used in this paper were recorded, transcribed, and translated from Hawaiian to English by Sam L. No'eau Warner, bilingual research specialist in the evaluation project. Mr. Warner teaches advanced Hawaiian language classes at the University of Hawai'i, and has been instrumental in helping to found the Pūnana Leo Hawaiian language private preschools in Hawai'i and the Hawaiian Language Immersion public school program.